

EVACUEE**NEWSLETTER**

Number 9

Naval Air Station Meridian

September 9, 2005

USPHS, Red Cross Reunite Loved Ones in Katrina's Wake

By Captain Paul Seligman, USPHS

Mrs. Laura Ruiz lived with her husband and elderly 69-year-old "adopted" step-father in a home on 15-foot brick pilings in Bay St. Louis, Ms, built to withstand the worst that nature could throw at her.

When Hurricane Katrina came ashore, they were confident that could wait out yet another storm. They watched in horror as the water reached their doorstep, drove them into the attic, and finally had them frantically trying in vain to break through the peak of their roof from the attic.

"It must have been 35 feet of water" according to Mrs. Ruiz.

And when all hope seemed to be lost, their home simply split apart, releasing her, her husband and step-father into the waters of the Jordan River. For hours, they swam, floated, held on to debris, and struggled to survive. She and her step-father ended up in a tree where they were rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter 12 hours

after the storm had passed and the water began to subside. She lost sight of her husband hours earlier after struggling together, but her last image of him was as he reached higher ground.

Her step-father and she were treated for dehydration, exposure, lots of bumps and bruises at Biloxi Memorial Hospital. After treatment they spent four days in the basement of the hospital then at an emergency shelter in a local elementary school. On Monday Sept. 5th they were evacuated to the Federal Medical Station (FMS) set up and manned by the US Public Health Service (PHS) at Naval Air Station Meridian. The FMS is a 362-bed medical facility set up in 24-hours. It was designed to receive just such evacuees, to help decompress over-stretched and overburdened hospitals and shelters along the Mississippi coast by receiving patients with low levels of medical needs. PHS social workers immediately went to work to help Mrs. Ruiz reconnect with her husband and family, all of whom she had lost touch with.

At 2 a.m. on Thursday, the telephone rang at the night desk at the medical station. It was Mrs. Ruiz's daughter and son-in-law calling from a Red Cross shelter in New Iberia, La. Her husband was alive and well with a family in Slidell, La. They found her on the website set up by the Red Cross to help families and loved ones reconnect.

Today, plans are in progress to reunite the family, all of whom remarkably survived. Since the FMS was established 10 evacuees have been reconnected with family members.

The U.S. Navy has gone to great lengths to establish and accommodate the FMS on a busy, active naval air station where training and flight operation is ongoing. NAS Meridian is now also an active FEMA staging and transportation site for tons of relief supplies. The base is housing 900 military evacuees and their families from bases damaged or destroyed along the Gulf Coast. Also see www.familylinks.icrc.org/katrina/locate

Military Relief Hotlines

Military One Support Number (All services) 1-800-342-9647

U.S. Marines

1-800-847-1597

U.S. Army

1-800-626-3317

National Guard

1-888-777-7731

U.S. Air Force/Keesler AFB

1-800-435-9941

U.S. Navy

1-877-414-5358

DFAS Customer Contact Center

1-888-332-7411

Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Service Center 1-877-272-7337

Notes of interest for Hurricane evacuees

Branch Medical Clinic Meridian

The clinic is closed on weekends and holidays. We do have a duty crew who can take your calls for emergencies at 601-679-2633.

School uniform donations requested

With school children in the local area now wearing uniforms to school, a need exists for uniform clothing for the children. Items requested are: khaki or navy blue pants; red, white and blue polo shirts. School uniform donations can be taken to the Fleet and Family Support Center.

Evacuees with friends in Navy Family Housing

All evacuees who are staying in Navy Family Housing with friends or family who have not registered with the co-located Housing and Evacuation Offices should go to the Housing Office and do so.

What about school for the children?

School registration for evacuated children is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Sept 8 from 9am-12pm. Call FFSC at 601-679-2360.

Can I get a job while I'm here?

Temporary employment opportunities may be available if you are interested in working while you are here. Please check with the Fleet and Family Service Center for job information.

Can I volunteer to help while I'm here

The American Red Cross needs helpers for various tasks in several locations. Please call 601-485-5151. FFSC is also accepting volunteers. Contact Stacey Jamison at 601-679-2360.

Donations needed by Red Cross and Others

Donations of food, drinks, diapers, formula, and personal hygiene items should go to Frank Cochran Center.

How do I register for WIC?

You can contact the WIC office at 601-693-2451. It is located at 5224 Valley Street behind the Mississippi Highway Patrol Office on Highway 19N in the College Park area. You also can contact the Greater Meridian Health Clinic at 601-693-0118. It is located at 2701 Davis St., which is near St. Patrick's Church.

Navy College

If you are unable to attend classes because of command obligations or a lack of internet access, contact Navy College. All on-base classes will be moved off base. Call 601-679-2671 or your local college for more info. MCC students begin night classes immediately. Contact Pam Paden 601-679-2450. EMCC classes will be held at Northeast Lauderdale High School at regular times. Call Loretta Boswell 601-679-3570.

Housing Residents

Please pile all yard debris at the curb for pickup. Do not place vinyl siding at curb. Notify Housing Maintenance for pickup. If you see a snake call Security at ext. 2958. For maintenance emergencies call 601-938-7701. Regular calls dial 601-679-7001.

Military Family Locator Service

This service will be used to track and assist in locating affected families. Call 888-777-7731. You will need the individual's last name last four digits of their SSN.

Laundry Locations

Bldg. 218-C wing-All three floors

Bldg. 203-lobby areas-both floors

Bldg. 205-lobby areas-both floors

Sunday Church Services at NAS Community Chapel

Protestant Sunday School: 9 a.m.

Protestant Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.

Catholic Mass: 5 p.m.

NAS Community Chapel Weekday Activities

Wednesday Prayer Luncheon: 11:15 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.

LDS Family Evening: 6 p.m.

Various Hours of Operation for on-base facilities

NEX: M-F, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun, 12:30 p.m.

Gas Station: 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily -- no after hours sales

Country Store: 9 a.m.-9 p.m. daily

Commissary: Tues-Sat, 10 a.m.-p.m.

NFCU: M-F, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Citizen's Natl Bank: M-Th, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Welcome Center: M-F, 7 a.m.-10 p.m.; S-S+H, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.

FFSC: THIS WEEKEND Sept 10-11-8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Normal hours will resume Monday-7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

The office is up and running in Bldg. 266, next door to the Fleet and Family Support Center. Hours of operation are Mon, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tue-Fri, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Services can be provided for active duty and retired Navy personnel and their families, and for all service personnel and their families. Services for reservists with less than 30 days active duty are authorized until Thursday.

Pharmacies

Winn Dixie: Closest to the base, 12 miles south of base along Hwy 39 on SE corner of Hwy 39 and North Hills Street (first light when traveling south on Hwy 39) -- on left when heading south. Open M-F, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Phone: 601-485-0818.

Mr. Discount Pharmacy: Next the hospitals in downtown Meridian. Go south on Hwy 39 and as road forks, stay to the right and veer right as road forks again onto 14th St. Pharmacy is on left, across from Jeff Anderson Medical Center. Open every day from 8 a.m. until midnight. Phone: 601-693-1978.

Hospitals

All three hospitals are within one to two blocks of each other in downtown Meridian -- travel south on Hwy 39 and as the highway moves back into the city, it will fork at one point and you will veer to the right. In approximately six blocks it will fork again, and you will veer to the right and take a right onto 14th St. Anderson is on the right and Rush on the left. Riley is behind Rush on Constitution Ave. and 12th St. Phone: Anderson, 601-553-6111; Riley, 601-484-3357; Rush, 601-703-9260.

TRICARE Authorization Number

1-800-444-5445. If you have an emergency and need to be seen at an ER, you will need to contact your PCM after you return home to have a consult placed for authorization of that visit. Only your PCM can place those consults for you.

Beware of Fraudulent Web Sites

Over the past few days, domain names that redirect users to malicious websites have appeared online, in addition to email scams requesting donations for those impacted by the hurricane. While some of these sites and messages may be legitimate, many are not. At the time of this bulletin, please be aware that the following domains are reported to be suspicious: katrina-help.com; katrinacleanup.com; katrinarelief.com. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and additional domains may continue to appear.

Federal Disaster Aid available for those suffering losses in designated areas

Designated Areas

Alabama: Baldwin, Clark, Choctaw, Mobile, Sumter and Washington Counties

Louisiana: Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Palquemes, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Parishes

Mississippi: Adams, Amite, Attala, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Claiborne, Clarke, Clay, Copiah,

Covington, Forrest, Franklin, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Itawamba, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Leake, Lee, Lincoln, Lowndes, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Smith, Stone, Walthall, Warren, Wayne, Webster, Wilkinson, and Winston Counties

Call FEMA to apply for assistance at 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired.

These numbers are for people in the designated federal disaster

areas only.

Be prepared to give your Social Security number, describe your losses, provide financial information, and give directions to the damaged property. If you get a busy signal, try to call after 6 p.m. or on the weekend.

The information provided gets you in the system. An inspector will schedule an appointment and visit the property. You should be there. A housing assistance check will arrive in 7-10 days, if you are eligible. There may be an SBA application enclosed. You MUST fill out and return to be eligible for any further assistance.

The Daily Coastie News

Coastie News is provided by the coasties for the coasties

Donations: Food, clothing, toys and diapers are coming to the Family Support Center. Contact 601-679-2358/2360. Or contact Brenda Meyers at 601-679-9921.

Coast Guard Housing Support: contact Gloria Cokel at 601-679-5551 or 604-483-3968. Also contact Cindy Vasquez at 601-679-9726.

Credit Union: The Navy Federal Credit Union is open from 0900-1400. For all pay, travel and evacuation questions call the "People Cell" at 314-539-3900 EXT. 2337, 2338, 2340.

Legal: Legal assistance is available for

setting up wills and powers of attorney at the CBQ.

1. The Navy Relief Society has authority to issue mutual assistance loans for over \$500 for evacuees that have lost household goods on a case by case basis. Contact Kelli Dickman at 601-679-2504

2. BellSouth 1-888-757-6500

3. Galaxy Cablevision 1-800-365-6988

4. Personnel in housing:

Your address is:

Your name

Your house number and street

Meridian, MS 39305

5. UDC phone number is 1-800-874-6841

6. Dependents are reminded to check with medical to change your Primary Care Manager. ALL dependants please contact Brenda Myers at 601-679-9921 or at 809 Hull St.

7. Coast Guard Ombudsman is Brenda Myers at 809 Hull St. at 601-679-9921. Any spouses who wish to volunteer to assist with donations, contact the Ombudsman

8. MLC entitlements will be here on Friday, 09SEP05, to talk with active duty and dependants.

The Hurricane Katrina Help Line Telephone number is 1-757-889-6440 and will be manned 24/7 until further notice. Please refer all requests for evacuation orders, evacuation allowance payments, advance pay (military only), and EFT special payments (military only) to the PSD Afloat Hurricane Katrina Help Line

Navy 24-hour help line for family info & muster 1-877-414-5358

Family info or for help, call Red Cross 1-866-GET-INFO

MERIDIAN NAS BUS SCHEDULE									
PLEASE HAVE CASH FARES READY WHEN BOARDING. MUST HAVE CORRECT CHANGE!									
UNION STATION	DEPART NAS MATSS-1	NTTC	MCCAIN LANES	BONITA LAKES MALL	REQUEST ONLY WALMART	APPLEBEES	OTHER		
FRI.									
4:35 PM	5:00 PM	5:05 PM	5:10 PM	5:30 PM					
	6:00 PM	6:05 PM	6:10 PM	6:30 PM	6:40 PM				
7:00 PM	8:10 PM	8:20 PM	8:30 PM	8:00 PM					
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9:30 AM	10:00 AM	10:05 AM	10:10 AM	10:50 AM	11:00 AM				
11:10 AM	12:00 PM	12:05 PM	12:10 PM	12:50 PM	1:00 PM				
1:10 PM	2:00 PM	2:05 PM	2:10 PM	2:50 PM	3:00 PM				
3:10 PM	4:00 PM	4:05 PM	4:10 PM	4:30 PM					
	5:00 PM	5:05 PM	5:10 PM	5:30 PM					
	6:00 PM	6:05 PM	6:10 PM	6:30 PM					
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12:30 PM	1:00 PM	1:05 PM	1:10 PM	1:30 PM					
	2:00 PM	2:05 PM	2:10 PM	2:30 PM					
	3:00 PM	3:05 PM	3:10 PM	3:30 PM					
3:40 PM	5:00 PM	5:05 PM	5:10 PM	6:00 PM	6:05 PM				
6:10 PM	6:40 PM	6:45 PM	6:50 PM	PASSENGER DROP OFF IF ANY	7:20 PM			PM OFF DUTY	